

Press Pack

Occitania, Ancient Roman land





FRANCE'S SECOND-BIGGEST REGION,

13 'departments' in an area bigger than Ireland



8 SITES INSCRIBED ON UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST:

the Canal du Midi, Gavarnie - Mont Perdu, Way of St James, the Episcopal City of Albi, the Causses and the Cévennes, the Pont du Gard, the Historic Fortified City of Carcassonne, the Fortifications of Vauban (Villefranche-de-Conflent and Mont-Louis)



2 NATIONAL PARKS



1 MARINE NATURE PARK



8 REGIONAL NATURE PARKS



44 WINTER SPORTS RESORTS



41 TOP OCCITANIE SITES

Agde-Pézenas, Aigues-Mortes - Camargue Gardoise - Saint Gilles, Albi - Vallée du Tarn, Ariège médiévale : Foix - Mirepoix - Montségur, Ariège préhistorique : Niaux - Tarascon - Mas d'Azil, Armagnac - Abbaye et Cités, Auch, Aux sources du Canal du Midi (Sorèze, Revel, Saint Ferréol), Bastides et Gorges de l'Aveyron (Villefranche de Rouergue, Najac, St Antonin, Caylus, Villeneuve d'Aveyron), Canal du Midi - Béziers, Carcassonne et les Citadelles du vertige, Cévennes, Cirque de Gavarnie - Cauterets - Pont d'Espagne, Cirque de Navacelles - Lodève, Collioure en Côte Vermeille, Conques, Cordes et cités médiévales, Gorges de l'Hérault - Gorges du Tarn, Gorges de la Jonte - Causses & Vallées Cévenoles, Grand Figeac, vallée du Lot et du Célé, La Grande-Motte, Le Grand Montauban, Lourdes, Luchon, Marciac, Massif du Canigò, Massif du Néouvielle-Vallée d'Aure et du Luron, Mende coeur de Lozère, Millau-Roquefort Moissac, Montpellier, Narbonne Méditerranée, Nîmes - Pont du Gard - Uzès, Perpignan Méditerranée, Pic du Midi, Rocamadour Vallée de la Dordogne, Rodez, Saint-Bertrand de Comminges, Valcabrière, Sète, Toulouse, Vallée du Lot, Cahors, Saint-Cirq-Lapopie, Puy-l'Evêque



28 THERMAL SPA CENTRES



220 KILOMETRES OF MEDITERRANEAN COASTLINE



MORE THAN 50 MARINAS

4th France's fourth biggest tourist region



with
**15.9
BILLION**
euros visitor spending



and
96 500
paid tourism jobs



or
10%
of regional GDP

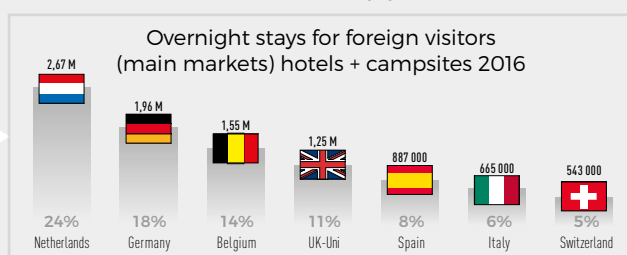


1st
region for
French tourists



3rd
region for
overseas tourists

**30
MILLION**
visitors every year



1st The highest accommodation capacity in France



with
**3.3
MILLION**
beds



nearly
**26.3
MILLION**
nights at open-air accommodation sites
(highest rank in France)



**16.3
MILLION**
hotel nights
(4th highest in France)



1st France's most popular thermal spa destination



drawing
188,000
spa users



around
1/3
of the national spa market

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The Romans conquered the South of Gaul in 118BC and established a vast and rich province, "La Narbonnaise", stretching from the Alps to the Pyrenees with Narbo Martius (Narbonne) as its capital. This is when the famous Via Domitia (Domitian Way) was built between Rome and Spain. Gaul was conquered in 51BC during the siege of the oppidum of Uxellodunum in the Lot region.

The Roman colonisation lasted for centuries and left countless relics of this prosperous and fascinating time. 2000 years after the peak of the Gallo-Roman civilisation, the enthusiasm for this part of our history hasn't waned. From the iconic Pont du Gard and opulent Villa de Montmaurin to Nîmes, "the French Rome", and the fabulous Eauze treasure, join us on a maiden voyage through Ancient Rome in Occitania. Your adventure will take you to the very latest gem: the Musée Narbo Via whose 2021 opening is going to be the year's biggest cultural event in the region.

The event

2021: MUSÉE NARBO VIA OPENING IN NARBONNE (AUDE)

The Occitania Region has a new home for its archaeological heritage with an international museum devoted to the capital of Narbonne, the first Roman colony founded in Gaul in 118BC. It (re)visits the ancient city of Narbo Martius and the passionate research in this region to set a benchmark for Roman culture in the South of France alongside the Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes, Pont du Gard and Musée Arles Antique. Narbo Via and its 2760m² of galleries are designed by the architect Norman Foster, built by the Occitania Region and home to an outstanding collection of over 6000 items including almost 760 headstone fragments exhibited in a huge modular wall. The museum's pieces give visitors the chance to explore the city of Narbo Martius in all its glory: its social organisation, urban planning, houses and decorative features (with murals from Le Clos de la Lombarde, a Narbonne archaeological site with the biggest collection of Gallo-Roman paintings outside Italy), its economic and port life. A whole host of resources will spark visitors' curiosity with the likes of 3D reconstructions. The museum will also be a prime research centre devoted to ancient archaeology. It will provide a social hub too with a lecture theatre, workshops, restaurant, shop and gardens. The archaeological sites of Horreum, in the city centre, and Amphoralis in Sallèles d'Aude are also part of the Narbo Via cultural cooperation organisation.

www.narbovia.fr



A major site: Pont du Gard



The Romans designed ingenious aqueduct systems to channel precious running water from sometimes distant springs to the cities for fountains, latrines and Roman baths.

20,000m³ of water are estimated to have been required every day to meet Nîmes's daily requirements at the time. An impressive 52.7km long aqueduct supplied water to Nîmes from the Eure spring in Ucétia (Uzès). Engineers had to build a series of bridges and tunnels through heaths and ditches to reach Nîmes with a total difference in height of just 17 metres!

The structure's crowning glory is the famous Pont du Gard, an architectural gem listed as UNESCO World Heritage of Humanity. With its 49

arches on 3 storeys and impressive measurements (275m long and 49m tall), the Pont du Gard enabled the aqueduct to cross the Gardon.

Further information Visit the outstanding "Musée des Aqueducs" at the Pont du Gard to find out everything there is to know about this feat of hydraulic engineering built in IAD.

www.pontdugard.fr



Major Roman cities

When the Romans colonised Gaul, they significantly influenced existing urban developments or founded towns based on a single model: streets at right angles with 2 main roads (the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus* which would meet at the main square, the forum, surrounded by temples), Roman baths for health and wellness, a theatre, arenas (amphitheatre) for entertainment, sanctuaries, city walls and one or more necropolises on the outskirts.

The region's biggest cities were estimated to have a population of a few dozen thousand at most.

Narbonne	Population: 35000
Nîmes	Population: 25000
Toulouse	Population: 20000
Cahors	Population: 15000
Béziers, Rodez	Population: 10-15000
St-Bertrand-de-Comminges	Population: 5-10000

NARBO MARTIUS (NARBONNE)

The first "daughter of Rome" became the biggest city in Southern Gaul. Conveniently located on the crossroads of land-based trade routes and with the Empire's 2nd biggest port after Ostia (Rome), Narbonne prospered for centuries with its flourishing

trade relationships (exports of grain, wine, oil, pottery, amphorae and imports of Italian wine).

There are now few remnants of the city's heyday: there's the *horreum*, an outstanding section of the *Via Domitia*, Le Clos de la Lombarde (residential district) and a luxurious villa currently being excavated near Narbonne's ancient La Nautique Port. Most of the relics found at these sites are exhibited at Musée Narbo Via.

The horreum is undoubtedly the most spectacular relic to date: these underground corridors from IBC encapsulate trade in Narbo Martius at the time. They were originally underneath a bygone development, probably a market.

www.narbonne-tourisme.com



INF+

Villa d'Auguste in La Nautique ?

After unearthing a pond measuring a surprisingly opulent 3500m² in 2011, archaeologists believe there was an extraordinary villa just above. Excavation revealed a 300m long park with wide terraced walls, proof of elegant grounds overlooking the port area to the south. The villa had a wing that was 150m long by 15m wide, a number of large rooms and a sophisticated drainage system that's still intact. Archaeologists found an 18m x 6m swimming pool next door and a covered circular pool measuring 6m in diameter.

Based on the villa's dating, it was probably built for Emperor Augustus himself or the Province's Governor.



THE MUSÉE DE LA ROMANITÉ

Visitors can go on a unique trip back in time at the Musée de la Romanité opposite the Nîmes Arenas: 5000 outstanding pieces, 65 multimedia resources, 25 centuries of history... to explore the French Rome, Nîmes. The tour begins around the Sanctuaire de la Fontaine, where the city sprang from, brought to life by the relics of a monumental pediment adorning the museum's main atrium. The majestic double-spiral staircase leads visitors to the Gallic period among the Volcae Arecomici who lived here before the Romans. It travels back through time and dives into Roman everyday life, the city and its people almost 2000 years ago. A trip through the Middle Ages up to the present day gives an insight into the incredible influence of Ancient Rome over the centuries. Elizabeth de Portzamparc has designed its contemporary architecture as a draped glass toga whose glass folds bring to mind a mosaic. This social hub is an innovative science museum, bookshop, bistronomy restaurant with views of the arenas and a menu designed by a 2-Michelin star chef, Mediterranean garden and rooftop with breathtaking 360° views of Nîmes' gems. The museum is suitable for all visitors. There are educational booklets for children, audiovisual guides in several languages and a wide array of guided tours on a range of subjects available to book.

www.museedelaromanite.fr

NEMAUSUS (NÎMES)

Nicknamed "French Rome", Nîmes has the world's best-kept Roman monuments with its impressive arenas hosting 24,000 spectators, the Maison Carrée, Porte d'Auguste, Tour Magne, Sanctuaire de la Fontaine and castellum divisorium*. Covering 220 hectares and entirely surrounded by city walls, Nîmes was one of the biggest cities in the Narbonne region.

The Arenas

The Nîmes Arenas are among the biggest Roman amphitheatres in the world to date (133m long, 101m wide and 20m high) and certainly the best preserved. Two museums enable visitors to experience the worlds of gladiators and bull fighting as corridas are still held at the arenas.

www.arenas-nimes.com

The Maison Carrée

The Maison Carrée has fabulous proportions and is inspired by the Temple of Apollo in Rome. It is the only completely intact ancient temple in the world and measures 26m long, 15m wide and 17m high. During construction, the Maison Carrée was an imperial cult site worshipping Augustus' two grandsons: the consuls and military leaders Lucius Caesar and Caius Julius Caesar. The temple is now used to screen the film "Nemausus - The Birth of Nîmes".



The Tour Magne (32m high) is one of few remnants of the ancient Augustan city wall. It stands at the highest point of the city, Mont Cavalier.

The Sanctuaire de la Fontaine was built around the Nemausus spring, which gave its name to the city of Nîmes, and was a site where people worshipped the cult of Augustus. Among the pieces found at this Augusteum are an altar in the middle of a nymph, a theatre (or odeon) and an odd vaulted building that we now call the temple of Diane. Temple or library? There's been a lot of speculation about the building but nothing has yet been proven.

www.nimes-tourisme.com

TOLOSA (TOULOUSE)

2000 years ago, Tolosa (Toulouse) was a medium-sized city with a population of 20,000 surrounded by stunning red brick and stone city walls which you can still see in places (Place St-Jacques, Théâtre de la Cité). It had a theatre, a forum with two temples, a 12,000-seater amphitheatre and Roman baths in what is now the Ancely district.

Apart from the amphitheatre, marble pool at the Ancely Roman baths and sections of the aforementioned city walls, you can see the city's Roman influences in its main roads, the cardo and decumanus, which are now Rue Saint-Rome and Rue de Metz and meet on Place Esquirol where the forum was (ruins in the underground car park).

2000 years ago, Tolosa was a major trade platform for Italian wine brought in from Narbonne port. A fair amount of cargo was consumed on-site with the rest sent to Aquitaine and especially Bordeaux as the Garonne River was used to ship freight.

A trip to **the Musée St-Raymond**, home to the best collection of Roman sculptures in France after the Louvre, then the Catholic Institute (tours on request or during the Heritage Days) will give you an insight into the Tolosa heyday whilst the city's Tourist Information centre provides themed tours to visit the ruins.

<https://saintraymond.toulouse.fr>

www.toulouse-tourisme.com



**The castellum divisorium (water tower) delivered water from the aqueduct from Uzès via the Pont du Gard.*



The Trophy of Augustus

It was discovered in 1926 and was a monument that was 6m long and 3m tall devoted to Augustus. It was built around 13-10BC and had: 1 naval trophy celebrating the victorious Battle of Actium and 2 land trophies for Gaul and Spain's defeat to Rome. - The discovered fragments are now housed at the archaeological museum in Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges

DIVONA CADURCORUM (CAHORS)

Divona Cadurcorum (Cahors) had a 6500-seater theatre, a 100m x 90m amphitheatre and one of the few relics that are still standing are the Roman baths (Arc de Diane and pools).

The ever-bustling city is surrounded by a large loop of the Lot River and was called Divona Cadurcorum in reference to Divona, a supposedly miraculous spring which comes out near Valentré Bridge. It's now called the Fontaine des Chartreux where divers found a whole host of ancient coins.

From IAD, Cahors was a wealthy Gallo-Roman city exporting its famous linen and wine as far as Rome. Don't miss a trip to Musée Henri Martin to see the masterpieces unearthed during the city's excavations (statues, coins, mosaics etc.).

www.cahorsvalleedulot.com

LUGDUNUM CONVENARUM (ST-BERTRAND DE COMMINGES)

Lugdunum Convenarum (St-Bertrand de Comminges) appeared on a crossroads where a large market was held. Lugdunum Convenarum was founded in 72BC by Pompey. A monument with a circular outer wall was built in 10AD on the site of these primitive crossroads followed by the town's public amenities: temple for the imperial cult, public baths, market, 4000-seater theatre etc. The town was bigger than Lutèce (Paris) with a population of 5-10,000.

OTHER GALLO-ROMAN TOWNS IN OCCITANIA

LACTORA (LECTOURE)

Lactora (Lectoure) had baths, a sanctuary devoted to Cybele and a city wall, some of which you can still see. The archaeological museum plays host to the world's only collection of 21 taurobolium altars from the cult of Cybele, a coin collection, funerary cult items and mosaics.

www.lectoure.fr/fr-musee+archeologique.html



ELUSA (EAUZE)

Elusa (Eauze) has its own archaeological museum which opened in 1995. It houses an outstanding Gallo-Roman treasure brought to light in 1985.

The collection of 28,054 coins and fifty-odd pieces of jewellery and precious items dates back to 3AD. The wealth, quality and fantastic condition of the jewellery and coins make it one of the most important treasures found in France in the last four decades. The ruins of a rich domus (townhouse) have also been showcased (please see corresponding chapter).



Baths & wellness among the Romans



The Romans took great care of their health and well-being and built baths wherever they went. The baths that were built in the cities were popular social venues integral to the "Roman" lifestyle. Rich homeowners had their own private baths in their luxury villas.

You'll find the most impressive Roman baths in **Cahors** (pool, Arc de Diane) in the Lot, **Toulouse** (marble pool in the Ancely district), **Montmaurin**, **Montoulieu-St-Bernard**, **St-Bertrand-de-Comminges** in Haute-Garonne, **Gaujac** in the Gard and **Moissac** in the Tarn-et-Garonne.



ROMANS AND WELLNESS

The Romans also recognised the health-giving benefits of hot water springs very early on. Most spa resorts that are still open today were already famous 2000 years ago, as were outdoor hot springs (e.g. Dorres and Llo in the Pyrénées Orientales).

The Roman ruins incorporated into the current **Thermes d'Amélie-les-Bains** spa in the Pyrénées-Orientales also enhance the resort's renown.





The first **baths in Luchon** (Illexon) were built in Roman times. As proven by their motto engraved on the current building's façade "Balneum Lixonense post Neapolitense primum": the Luchon baths are the first after those of Naples. Emperor Caesar Augustus came here for treatment.

Bagnères-de-Bigorre (Vicus aquensis) was a famous spa resort. Marble votive altars were found here including three devoted to nymphs and two to a local divinity called Agho. You can see them at the town's Musée du Marbre.

Balaruc-les-Bains in Hérault may now be the top spa resort in France but it was already an opulent spa city 2000 years ago.

The Via Domitia

The Romans upgraded existing paths or built ex-nihilo new carriageways through their provinces so they could easily travel over land across their vast empire.

The Roman roads were simple clay paths in the countryside that were cobbled or paved through the towns and cities. The roads were often marked by stone columns called milestones which told users how far they were from the next city.

The roads were primarily for Roman legions to get around but were soon used by traders and the Roman Empire's postal service. Their use encouraged communication between major Roman cities and this contributed to their wealth.

The Domitian Way or Via Domitia was the first road the Romans built in Gaul and one of the most famous. It runs from Italy through the South of France along the Occitania coastline from Beaucaire to Col de Panissars (Spanish border).

You can still see countless remnants of the Via Domitia:

COBBLED, PAVED OR REINFORCED SOIL SECTIONS

Several sections have been cleared or protected as Monuments Historiques. The most impressive ones are in Nîmes (Gard), Ambrussum (Hérault), Narbonne and Sigean (Aude). Cobbled or paved with stones that have been polished by centuries of use, they bear the traces of ruts carved out by chariot wheels and are a moving reflection of life back then.





MILESTONES

These 2-4m high columns at 50-80cm in diameter weren't positioned every Roman mile (1 mile = 1.480km) like current boundary stones. They were more like signs that appeared regularly along the road to say how far the next stop was. They bear several inscriptions including the name of the emperor who ordered the road's construction or repair, his titles and primarily the distances between where they were and the towns, major crossroads or borders. Over 90 of these kinds of milestones have been found on the Via Domitia.

Some milestones are still in situ like Le Clos d'Argence in Beaucaire (Les Colonnes de César) in the Gard and some have been moved such as on the La Clotte site in Roquefort-les-Corbières in the Aude. Most milestones are preserved and you can see them in their local archaeological museums such as the Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes and Musée Narbo Via in Narbonne.



TRIUMPHAL ARCHES AND CITY GATES

When the road entered a city or crossed a border, it tended to go through a gate or triumphal arch like the Porte d'Auguste and Porte de France in Nîmes.

BRIDGES

When the road ran into rivers that were too wide (e.g. the Rhône to get into Beaucaire), there was a ferry system or sturdy bridges were built to span several coastal rivers.

Pont d'Ambroix over the Vidourle (between the Gard and Hérault) is one of the most impressive bridges. It has been listed as a Monument Historique since 1840. It was built in 4AD and in use until 1299 when it was demolished to force users onto another bridge with a toll, slightly upstream in Lunel. The 180m long bridge originally had eleven arches but now all that's left is the fifth one in the middle of the river. The fourth arch appears in the 1857 painting *Le Pont d'Ambrussum* by Gustave Courbet which you can see at the Fabre Museum in Montpellier; the arch collapsed in 1933 when the Vidourle flooded. The bridge is part of the Ambrussum archaeological site.

www.ambrussum.fr



Gallo-Roman villae

Large agricultural landowners built themselves stunning houses with the ultimate in luxury: villae.

These huge houses, sometimes with dozens of rooms, had all the period's mod cons (baths, hypocaust heating, wastewater drainage etc.) and were beautifully decorated: mosaic flooring, murals, statues on the patios and in the gardens etc.

You can gaze at the beautiful mosaics at Villa Séviac in the Gers or Villa Loupian in the Hérault, marble baths or staggering ponds to keep seafood alive in Montmaurin in Haute-Garonne or the exceptional collection of busts of Roman emperors found at Villa Chiragan in Martres-Tolosanes in Haute-Garonne and now at the Musée Saint-Raymond in Toulouse.

SÉVIAC (GERS)

Villa Séviac is listed as a Monument Historique and among the biggest and most opulent residences in South West Gaul. It is a true 6500m² palace dating back to the Late Roman Empire (2-5AD). It's famous for its huge Roman baths (private 500m² baths) and outstanding polychrome mosaic flooring which cover 450m² with geometric decorative patterns depicting popular themes such as the acanthus and vine. Villa Séviac shows how mosaics were used as an interior design feature in a peristyle villa: they play a key role in terms of decorating the hallways, corridors, reception rooms and baths.



After a trip to the archaeological site, visit the archaeological museum in Montréal-du-Gers (2km away) to see some of the beautiful mosaics unearthed during the villa's excavation.

www.elusa.fr/la-villa-de-seviac



LOUPIAN (HÉRAULT)

North of Thau Lake, the archaeological museum built a few dozen metres from Villa Loupian presents the Gallo-Roman winery with the site's 600 years of history and business. The ruins are preserved in the villa's original location and home to thirteen exceptional polychrome mosaics from late antiquity (early 5AD). The site's museum is one of few French examples of a Gallo-Roman villa "in situ".

www.loupian.fr/musee-villa-loupian



MONTMAURIN (HAUTE-GARONNE)

The oldest part of the residential area now open to the public dates back to 1AD. It was expanded and redecorated in 4AD and occupied until the early 6th century. With its buildings covering 1.5ha, 117m x 126 façades, 150 opulently decorated rooms with running water and hypocaust central heating, gardens and arcades, it's a true rural palace. The Saint-Béat marble baths (ancient Pyrenean quarries still functioning today) and oyster ponds unearthed during excavations confirm how wealthy the aristocratic family living here were.

www.villa-montmaurin.fr

DOMUS DE CIEUTAT IN EAUZE (GERS)

An opulent 2700m² townhouse in the heart of one of Elusa's residential areas, Domus de Cieutat reveals a slice of its aristocratic neighbourhood's history. The owner would host guests in an unexpectedly luxurious and sophisticated setting. The Elusa archaeological site brings the domus ruins to life with exciting educational resources in the heart of one of the biggest French archaeological reserves.

www.elusa.fr/la-domus-de-cieutat-le-centre-d-interpretation

VILLA / DOMUS

The equivalent of the remote countryside villa is the domus, a luxurious townhouse occupied by the upper classes.



Vine growing

We have the Romans to thank for growing vines and Occitania is a hotbed for it. The Gaillac vineyard (Tarn) is one of the oldest in France and some of the region's wine was already famous at the time and imported by wealthy Romans from Narbonne port to Ostia port.

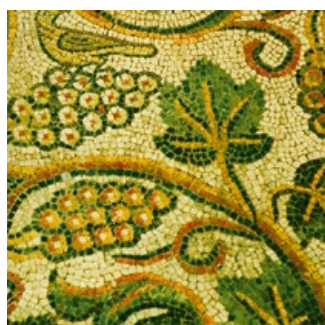
The Gallo-Roman Mas des Tourelles in Beaucaire (Gard) brings to life an ancient Roman winery and makes wine using ancient techniques. Countless relics have been brought to light in this vast villa specialising in vine growing (special kilns to make amphorae were found in the buildings).
<http://tourelles.com>



The wine was nothing like it is today: it was cut with water, sometimes seawater, and flavoured with spices. It was stored in terracotta amphorae which were made on-site in the region's many pottery sites.

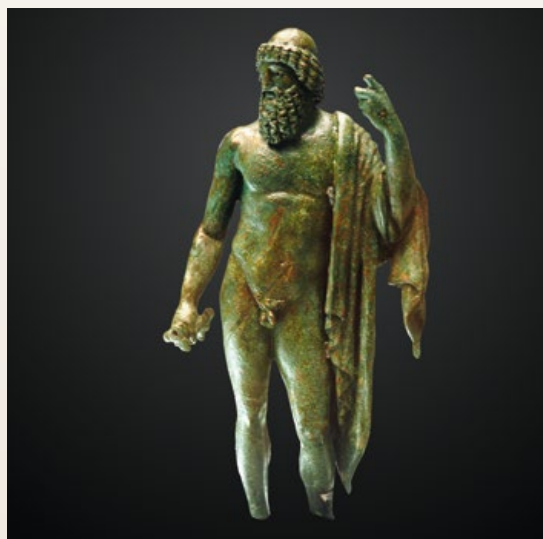
Venture into the impressive gypsum quarries in Portel-les-Corbières to Terra Vineia. The site is used as a wine cellar to age Corbières wine and introduce you to Narbonne's vineyard history with a Gallo-Roman villa showcasing ancient wine and food.

www.terra-vinea.com



INF+

A fantastic 30cm high bronze statue of Jupiter dating back to 1AD was unearthed in 2013 during work in the vineyard at the Tucayne winery in Bouillac (AOP Saint-Sardos - Tarn-et-Garonne). The winery owners wanted to celebrate the ancient heritage gem found in their vineyards and decided to call one of their premium 2012 vintages "Cuvée Jupiter". It is now on display at Musée Saint-Raymond (Toulouse)



Pottery sites



The pottery sites in La Graufesenque (Aveyron) and Sallèles d'Aude - Amphoralis (Aude) were very famous and the amphorae, vases, crockery and oil lamps they made were distributed throughout the Roman Empire on land and by sea from the ports in Narbonne or Lattes.

LA GRAUFRESENQUE IN MILLAU (AVEYRON)

500 potters made glazed red terracotta crockery in 1AD at the intersection between the Tarn and Dourbie and their terra sigillata was exported throughout the Roman Empire. Remnants of workshops, kilns, houses and a sanctuary bear witness to the trade.

www.graufesenque.com

AMPHORALIS, THE GALLO-ROMAN POTTERY MUSEUM IN SALLÈLES-D'AUDE (AUDE)

An incredible Gallo-Roman pottery village was discovered amid the vines near Narbonne. The museum overlooks the workshop's archaeological excavations where pottery was made from 1BC to late-3AD. Visitors can learn about the everyday life and work of potters who lived on-site and mass-produced Gauloise 4 wine amphorae as well as building materials (bricks, tiles) and everyday crockery. A trail in the museum grounds leads to reconstructions of kilns and a house identical to the uncovered ruins. The potters' garden next to the house is home to over 160 species that would have existed in Antiquity.

www.narbovia.fr



Oppida

Oppida (oppidum, singular) were fortified villages formerly occupied by Gallic tribes and built on hills for their defensive purposes. Most of them were abandoned during the Roman conquest which was a period of stability ideal for building plain conglomerations based on a new urban model.

Some have been properly researched and have visitor trails with information panels. Among them are the oppida in Ambrussum and Ensérune in the Hérault and Camp de César in the Gard.

AMBRUSSUM (HÉRAULT)

In late 4BC, the Gallic Volcae Arecomici built a real fortified town on a headland over the Vidourle. It was surrounded by impressive city walls and towers, some of which you can still see. At the start of the Gaul conquest, the Via Domitia was built for military convoys to travel on. Like other Gallic conglomerations on the road, Ambrussum became a major stopping place with several tabernae. The ruins of a spacious building that brings to mind our farm B&Bs also confirms its function as a place to stop.

www.ambrussum.fr

ENSÉRUNE (HÉRAULT)

An urban landscaping masterpiece, business in town was booming before the Romans appeared and only increased with the Via Domitia. End your trip at the site's museum.

www.enserune.fr

CAMP DE CÉSAR IN LAUDUN L'ARDOISE (GARD)

Camp de César is an 18ha archaeological site that's free to visit and one of the biggest in the region just 2km north of Laudun and its famous vineyard. The Gallo-Roman oppidum presents the ruins of five successive periods of occupation, from the Iron Age to the Middle Ages, on a limestone terrace 200m above the Rhône Valley. Excavations have unearthed countless ruins: forum, basilica, city walls, artisan district, residential area, necropolises etc. A permanent exhibition in the village centre displays the most important items found during excavation.

www.tourismegard.com/laudun-l-ardoise/le-camp-de-cesar



Ancient Rome today

The Gallo-Roman period has fascinated people for 2000 years and there are now countless events to relive its traditions, food and drink and lifestyle.

ANCIENT GRAPE HARVESTS AT MAS DES TOURELLES IN BEAUCAIRE (GARD)

A partially-excavated Gallo-Roman villa and amphora making workshops are buried in the winery's vineyards and revealed fascinating relics that proved there was a major trade in wine (and olive oil too). The Mas des Tourelles managers used this heritage and their winemaking experience to conduct extensive experimental archaeology work to make the wine taste like it did in Roman times. After reconstructing a Roman vineyard and wine cellar, they used winemaking recipes left by Latin writers to introduce you to the period's extensive variety of wine. Every September sees the ancient grape harvests, an event where people in costume recreate bygone techniques from grape picking to grape-treading barefoot.

<http://tourelles.com>



AN ARCHAEOBOTANY GARDEN: THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN GARDEN IN BALARUC LES BAINS (HÉRAULT)

This garden's design is based on different ancient archetypes to introduce visitors to Mediterranean plant species and their uses through seven original creations. The path teaches visitors about agriculture, horticulture, religion, medicine, magic, cookery and cosmetics. The path through floral corridors and leafy havens reveals the evolution and diversity of ancient gardens, the opulence of ornamental designs and landscaped concepts. Pergolas, arbours, fountains and a small amphitheatre in domesticated nature mingle with ancient architectural features.

<https://patrimoine.agglopoie.fr/jardin-antique-mediterraneen>



ROMAN FESTIVALS

THE GREAT ROMAN GAMES IN NÎMES (GARD)

Once a year Nîmes celebrates gladiator fights that were so popular among the ancient Romans and cinema today. The Great Roman Games are the biggest ancient history reconstruction in Europe and built on strong scientific foundations. The reconstruction is based on Emperor Hadrian's proven visit to Nîmes in 122AD. Locals were and are treated to show-stopping games. Two thousand years later, participants in the Great Roman Games make their costumes using identical materials to those used in Ancient Rome. They are passionate about experimental archaeology and work together with historians to bring their archaeological research to life. Combat techniques, costumes and weapons used by gladiators, Roman legionaries and Celtic fighters in the arenas are as true as possible to Ancient Rome. www.arenas-nimes.com/fr/decouvrir/grands-jeux-romains



PERFECT TIMES FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCES

MAY: Museum Night

JUNE: National Archaeology Day
<https://journées-archeologie.fr>

SEPTEMBER: European Heritage Days
<https://journéesdupatrimoine.culture.gouv.fr>

NOVEMBER: Narbonne Archaeology Festival
www.rencontres-archeologie.com

AGDE'S GREEK TRADING POST

AGDE, GREEK CITY (HÉRAULT)

Between mid-6BC and early 5BC, Agde's trading post (trade port) appeared on the volcano's hillsides overlooking the Hérault River where ships would unload their cargo of amphorae from Greece, Marseille, Italy and Spain.

A Greek colony with links to Marseille grew around the trading post in late 5BC. On the cusp of the Roman conquest, Agde was an important stopping place for Greeks in the Languedoc. It held onto its status as a Greek colony until 49BC when Marseille fell into Roman hands.


Agde's outstanding archaeological collections unearthed by 50 years of research in the Hérault River, sea and Thau Lake are on display at the Musée de l'Ephèbe et d'archéologie sous-marine. They reflect Agde's economic activity over the centuries as Agathé, a 2600 year old Greek city, revealed real submerged treasures: cargoes of crockery, royal navy weaponry, shipping of amphorae and raw materials, trade in artwork... including the famous statue of Alexander of Agde known as "the Ephèbe", a unique Hellenistic bronze found in French waters.

www.museecapdagde.com



REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS HOME TO GALLO-ROMAN ITEMS







<https://musees-occitanie.fr/collections/archeologie/>

 **Musées de France**

ARIÈGE

-  Musée du Palais des Evêques de St-Lizier






AUDE

-  Amphoralis (Sallèles-d'Aude)
-  Eburomagus
-  Maison de l'archéologie de Bram
-  Narbo Via (Narbonne)
-  Musée des Corbières (Sigean)
-  Musée de Peyriac-sur-Mer

AVEYRON

-  Musée de Millau et des Grands Causses (La Graufesenque)
-  Musée Fenaille de Rodez




GARD

-  Musée de la Romanité (Nîmes)
-  Musée du Pont du Gard
-  Musée Léon Alègre (Bagnols-sur-Cèze)
-  Musée Borias (Uzès)
-  Musée de l'oppidum de Nages









HAUTE-GARONNE

-  Musée archéologique (Martres-Tolosane)
-  Musée archéologique (Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges)
-  Musée archéologique (Montmaurin)
-  Musée du Pays de Luchon
-  Musée Saint-Raymond (Toulouse)





GERES

-  Musée archéologique et Trésor d'Eauze
-  Musée archéologique (Lectoure)
-  Musée des Amériques (Auch)



HÉRAULT

-  Musée d'Ambrussum
-  Lattara - Musée Henri Prades
-  Musée de l'oppidum d'Ensérune
-  Villa gallo-romaine de Loupian
-  Musée St-Jacques (Béziers)
-  Musée de Lodève
-  Musée archéologique (Murviel-les-Montpellier)
-  Musée de l'Ephébe et de l'archéologie sous-marine (Agde)





LOT

-  Musée Henri Martin (Cahors)
-  Musée d'Uxellodunum (Martel)
-  Musée de Capdenac-le-Haut
-  Musée Armand Viré (Luzech)



LOZÈRE

-  Musée archéologique de Banassac
-  Musée archéologique de Javols




HAUTES-PYRÉNÉES

-  Musée du marbre (Bagnères-de-Bigorre)
-  Musée Massey (Tarbes)
-  Musée pyrénéen (Lourdes)
-  Musée archéologique de Maubourguet

PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES

-  Centre archéologique Rémi Marichal de Ruscino
-  Musée du cloître d'Elne

TARN

-  Musée de l'Abbaye St-Michel (Gaillac)
-  Musée du pays rabastinois (Rabastens)
-  Musée du pays vaurais (Lavaur)

TARN-ET-GARONNE

-  Musée Ingres (Montauban)







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